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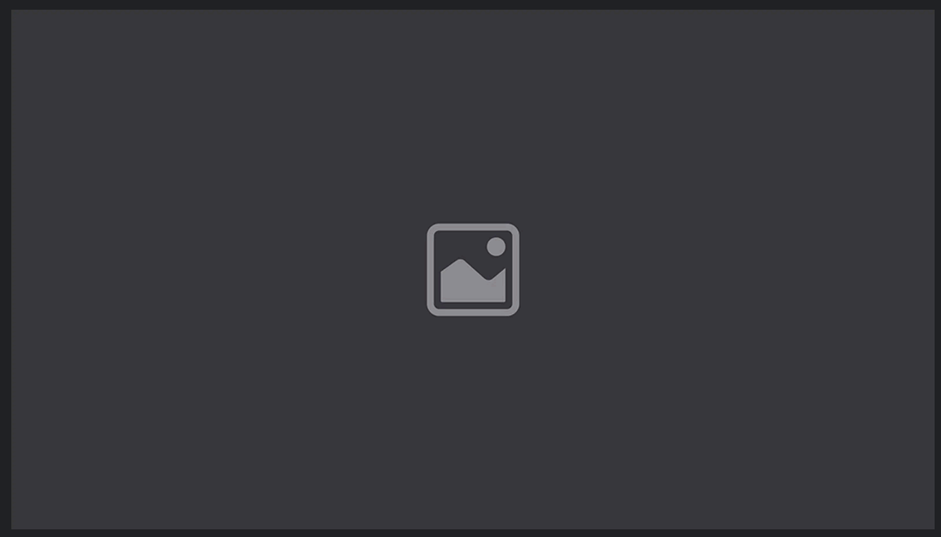
Eminem Became Slim Shady After Critics Compared Him To Another MC

And after critics called him soft.



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Eminem's used to rappers trying to sound like him, but at one point, he was accused of emulating another MC.

After he released his pre-fame LP *Infinite* in 1996, critics -- those who got their hands on it, at least -- claimed he sounded like veteran New York rapper AZ. Even Em's closest homies agreed.

"To me, that's what he sounded like, at first," D12's Kuniva told VladTV today, before explaining how that criticism really changed Marshall Mathers. "That was the pinnacle of him being polite and cool. Em was really a straight up cool cat, but the frustration came out when he started getting the criticism about the *Infinite* shit, like, 'It's kind of soft. You sound like this person/that person.'"

Em's been pretty open about this stage of his life, especially when he rapped about it on "Guts Over Fear":

> "Had to change my style, they said I'm way too soft/ And I sound like AZ and Nas/ Out came the claws/ And the fangs been out since then/ But up until the instant/ that I went against it/ It was ingrained in me that I wouldn't amount to a sh-tstain, I thought."

Bizarre, who was also interviewed by VladTV, said D12 also helped Em go from the more-tame MC on *Infinite* to the shocking and often controversial rapper we all got on *The Slim Shady LP*.

"Basically the whole thing of D12 is everybody has an alter ego, so try to be the villain, a person completely different from who you are," he explained. "That's when he took the name Slim Shady."

Shady and the surviving members of D12 are still cool, it seems. Last month, the group released their *Devil's Night Mixtape* and while Em wasn't on it, he eventually unleashed a freestyle to add to the tape's reloaded edition.